

Norte, and on to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Upon Mexico's independence, the presidio fell into ruins. Rebuilding efforts didn't begin until 1853, with a small church. The present structure was completed in 1882, and little has changed since then.

I invite everyone to visit the city of San Elizario and the historic Mission Valley of El Paso to learn more about the cultures and traditions of the 23rd District of Texas.

I congratulate the new city.

□ 1045

#### SUPPORT THE PROTECT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. LUMMIS). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, today, I am rising in support of H.R. 4836, the Providing Rigorous Oversight to Terminate Extreme Criminal Transfers, or PROTECT, Act.

The PROTECT Act is a piece of legislation I have introduced with Congressman WOLF of Virginia. It will ensure that Guantanamo Bay detainees do not ever end up on American soil. The PROTECT Act will prevent the transfer to the United States of Gitmo detainees or any other unprivileged enemy belligerents captured overseas. Current transfer prohibitions are tied to annual funding bills. The PROTECT Act is a long-term solution to the detainee issue and punishes unlawful transfers by up to 5 years in prison. It is supported by the 9/11 Families for a Safe and Strong America.

We do need the PROTECT Act. Why do we need it? Because of lawlessness. This administration has demonstrated a pattern of lawless behavior that is creating a constitutional crisis in our Nation. The most recent example of this was the President's failure to notify Congress about the release of the Taliban Five.

Make no mistake. The administration fully intends to bring Gitmo detainees to American soil, read them their Miranda rights, and give them access to our civilian courts. Gitmo detainees do not belong here. Their presence would endanger our local communities. We need a solution that will deter this administration from looking for ways around the law. It is important to consider the administration's actions regarding this detainee issue.

First, President Obama signed Executive Order No. 13492 on January 22, 2009, to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

Second, in November 2009, the administration announced 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed would be tried in New York. It later abandoned the idea.

Third, on December 15, 2009, a letter signed by Hillary Clinton and several other administration officials was sent to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, stating

the administration's intent to bring Gitmo detainees to the Thomson Correctional Center in Illinois.

These actions triggered an avalanche of opposition and forced the President to temporarily abandon his plan to bring these Gitmo detainees to the U.S.

However, in this year's State of the Union address, the President renewed his pledge to close Gitmo by stating:

And, with the Afghan war ending, this needs to be the year Congress lifts the remaining restrictions on detainee transfers and we close the prison at Guantanamo Bay.

Cliff Sloan, an administration special envoy for the closure of Guantanamo Bay, recently told ABC that the administration would have to work with Congress on changing the law so that detainees could be brought here.

He stated:

For detention and trial and prosecution, we think people should be allowed to be brought to the United States. Our supermax facilities are very secure, and we have hundreds of people convicted of terrorist offenses in our supermax prisons.

The President may not like having three branches of government, and he may not like checks and balances, but this system of checks and balances has served our Nation well. His lawless actions are creating a constitutional crisis, and it must stop. Gitmo detainees are coming to American soil unless we pass the PROTECT Act. Its criminal penalties will ensure that the President respects the law.

I encourage my colleagues to join me on the PROTECT Act, which includes a transfer prohibition, provides a long-term solution, enacts criminal penalties, and provides an exception for American citizens.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, Congregation Beth Chaverim, Virginia Beach, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Our one God of life's blessings who brings us together to be one family, gloriously diverse and gratefully united through the divine commandments of loving kindness.

In this House of Representatives' august Chamber of the most flourishing democracy, we give thanks to the awesome author of an endangered universe for the essential twin gifts of freedom

and responsibility. May You in Your infinite goodness ever guide our elected and appreciated lawmakers who are entrusted with the American people's agenda and the safeguarding of our precious liberties.

Mindful of living in our uncertain and unsettling world, let us reaffirm that the Creator's divinity and human dignity are inseparable, that he who upholds but one human life upholds a unique, irreplaceable universe of purpose and meaning.

May blemishes turn into blessings, hatred into love, violence into vision, and pain into promise in a global village at Shalom's peace at last.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### SONIA GARRO

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of Sonia Garro, a member of the pro-democracy group, Ladies in White, las Damas de Blanco, who, after being in prison for more than 2 years in one of Castro's gulags, will face a kangaroo trial on Monday. She faces the likelihood of 10 to 12 years in jail because she is brave enough to speak out, demanding respect for human rights and democratic change.

Cases like those of Sonia—and there are so many others—show us the true nature and brutality of the Castro regime. There have been efforts by Castro apologists aimed at changing our policy toward Cuba, but it is the Castro regime that must change its oppressive policies against the people of Cuba.

While Castro's thugs continue to flagrantly violate the fundamental liberties and the dignity of the Cuban people, the U.S. will stay on the side of